'State intervention a must for autistic children's social acceptability'

Staff Correspondent



SPEAKERS at a function recently called for state intervention to ensure care and education of the autistic children and create public awareness for their social acceptability. People think autistic children are mentally retarded, but actually they have intelligence and they require only special care for their development, said the speakers, calling for mass campaign to ensure their rights. The cultural function under the banner of 'Share with Innocence III' was organised by Hello's Association of Neophyte Students (HANS) at Biam auditorium in the city. Students from Autistic Welfare Foundation, Beautiful Mind, Caring Glory, Kalyani, School for Gifted Children and Society for Welfare of Autistic Children rendered songs, dance and recitations at the cultural function attended by the parents of autistic children and teachers of the specialised schools.

"Autism is a problem worldwide. In USA, one in every 150 people is autistic. Though there is no statistics on autism in Bangladesh, the number would not be very small," said eminent writer Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal. Talking to journalists, he said these children need special schools for development, but there are only a few such schools in Dhaka and Chittagong which are also very expensive.

"There should be state interventions in setting up such schools and help autistic children enter the mainstream schools gradually," said Dr Zafar Iqbal, professor of computer science and engineering at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology. Speaking as special guest at the programme, Dr Kamal Abdun Naser Chowdhury, director general of social services department, said he was amazed to see the talents of the autistic children. These children should get more attention of the society for their development, he added. "Autistic children have their own world of imagination and are detached from the real world. But they get to know the reality through special care and education," Naser Chowdhury said, adding that an institution for autistic children could be established under public-private partnership. It is only the well-off families that can help their children, but the autistic children of the poorer sections of the society should also be provided with this care, he added. Autistic Welfare Foundation Chairperson Dr Rawnak Hafiz said, "Our aim is to let people know about autism so that these children are not lost in the society. They have every right to development and to participate in the mainstream public. We want to ensure it." With a little help, these children could be eligible in mainstream schools, she said, adding, "We want a meaningful and happy life for them." HANS Chairperson Meer Soharabul Hossain also spoke at the function dedicated to the families having autistic children. The programme was supported by Rahimafrooz (Bangladesh) Ltd.

(Source: The Daily Star)

IUBian joins Youth Festival in Tokyo



IUBIAN Farha Khan joins the 6th Asian Youth Forum (AYF), taking place from the 28th of October till the 4th of November 2008 at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo, Japan. AYF plans to do a week long youth conference bringing together college-aged students from across Asia like Korea, Thailand, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Vietnam and Russia, for Academic seminars, intercultural workshops, social events and interpersonal exchanges. AYF aims to promote intercultural communication, international understanding, Asian awareness and leadership skills using English as a Global language.

Farha Khan, a student of Business Administration at IUB also happened to be the first and only student from IUB to have taken place in a program the institute had offered called 'The Study of the U.S. Institutes for Students Leaders' in Summer 2007, a five week study of the U.S. Branch giving better understanding of the people, institution and culture of the United States.